

House Republican Press Release

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REP. POWERS LEADS CAPITOL LYME DISEASE RALLY



HARTFORD – Greenwich Republican State Rep. Claudia “Dolly” Powers today helped kick off a Lyme Disease awareness rally on the steps of the state Capitol to create momentum for continued research and treatment of a growing malady that disables thousands each year.

Fairfield County has seen a 29 percent increase in the number of Lyme cases from 2004 to 2005. Statewide, Lyme cases have increased by 26 percent. Concerns have been raised recently that some Lyme Disease cases go unreported to the state from doctors or regional health agencies. Powers told rally attendees that her constituents want more flexibility in treatment, more consistent insurance policies and coverage and public education on the power and devastation of this disease.

“This debilitating disease can be dealt with effectively through greater education and proactive steps. Nearly 70 percent of new cases involve people under 19 years of age, and some common sense approaches can make a big difference,” she said. Powers is the House Deputy Minority Leader from the 151st District.

The event was staged by a non-profit group, Time for Lyme, formerly the Greenwich Lyme Disease Task force. Powers has been a leading advocate in the state legislature for increased funding to support research and education.

The first 51 cases of Lyme Disease were reported in 1977 and over the last three decades thousands have been infected by the tick born virus. Symptoms include fatigue, swelling and aching joints and severe headaches. Scientists warn that there could be a sharp increase in cases this year because of the unusually warm January that might have failed to kill the ticks.

“We need to do more to halt the spread of Lyme and we need to do more research to come up with a solution to eradicating this illness,” Powers said.